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Asking the Right Question

My heart lurched and tears pricked my eyes as I watched the local news story about a little girl, Kaylee Halko, age 7, who was granted her birthday wish to sing onstage at Walt Disney World with Belle from the children's movie "Beauty and the Beast" by the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Northwest Ohio.

Kaylee has progeria, a disease which makes her age about ten times faster than normal. The result of a genetic mutation, this disease affects one in four to eight million children. It is not typically passed down from parent to child; rather, it is the result of an extremely rare, chance gene change. Children with progeria suffer from progressive heart disease and other afflictions associated with the elderly. There is no known cure and most children with progeria only live to their early teens.

I watched the Disney cast, especially the character of Belle, sing along with Kaylee, obviously showing such love and admiration for this girl. Kaylee did steal the show, performing the song as if she had sung onstage all her life, with sweeping arm gestures and big smiles. She clearly was having the time of her life, but I couldn't help but ask God why this little girl was having to endure such pain, disfigurement, and suffering. Why would a loving Father let such misery happen?

As I thought more about Kaylee's story, another story came to mind, this time about a young man born blind.

In John 9:1-2, we read about Jesus' and his disciples' encounter with a man who had been blind since birth. The disciples were quick to ask the same question we all would ask: "Who's to blame? Who's at fault?" Specifically, they had narrowed it down to the possibilities that either the parents had sinned (which seemed most plausible) or the young man had somehow sinned in the womb.

Notice what Jesus says in verses 3-5:

Jesus said, "You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do. We need to be energetically at work for the One who sent me here, working while the sun shines. When night falls, the workday is over. For as long as I am in the world, there is plenty of light. I am the world's Light. (John 9:3-5—THE MESSAGE)

Jesus was telling the disciples that, in their attempt to blame someone for the young man's blindness, they were asking the wrong question. Instead, Jesus told them that there was no cause and effect at work in this situation. They needed to be more concerned about what God wanted to do for this young man, and then join His efforts with everything they had.

Jesus, who was always in tune with the Father, knew exactly what the Father wanted done in this young man's life. He made a paste of spit and clay and put it on the man's eyes. He told the man to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man did, and he became able to see.

I believe that the Father was involved in Kaylee's Make-A-Wish visit to Disney. I could see His love and affection for this little girl reflected in the faces of her cast mates onstage. I could feel His joy and pride over one of his children being blessed and honored and made to feel special. No incurable disease could stop the Trinity's love from being expressed in a tangible way to this little girl. And if that's true for Kaylee, it's also true for all of us. No matter what difficult situation we

face, the Trinity's love for us will seek to express itself through our circumstances and especially through other people.

Let's stop asking the wrong questions when we see situations we don't understand. Our fixation on "WHY?" distracts us from paying attention to what the Father, Son, and Spirit are whispering in our ear, and it keeps us from participating in the tangible expression of love the Trinity wants to give a person who is hurting. Instead, we need to look for what God wants done, and then energetically work to allow the expression of the Triune love through us.

~ Nan Kuhlman